

## MARSHFIELD NEWS HERALD

### Obey visits Marshfield UW campus

By Liz Welter • September 4, 2008



Laura Schmitt/Marshfield News-Herald

U.S. Rep. Dave Obey talks to a geography class Wednesday at the University of Wisconsin-Marshfield/Wood County.

One of the most powerful people in the nation's government stopped in Marshfield Wednesday afternoon to discuss current affairs with a geography class at the University of Wisconsin-Marshfield/Wood County.

U.S. Rep. Dave Obey, D-Wausau, was the guest speaker during the first day of assistant professor Iddi Adam's World Regional Geography class.

"We knew about a half hour before class started that he was going to be here," said Molly Simmer, 22, of Marshfield.

Initially some students said they thought listening to a politician speak would be boring. But Obey's talk was a series of anecdotes, piquing their interest in understanding more about current affairs.

"It wasn't politics at all. He was really informative on world issues," said Kaitlyn Vererka, 18, of Wisconsin Rapids.

As a young college student at UW-Marathon County, "which seems like a thousand years ago," Obey said he took a geography class that spurred his interest in global studies and ultimately led to his career in public service.

As a senior congressman, Obey talked about being in CIA headquarters and watching the real-time images taken by a Predator, a remotely-controlled aircraft, in the mountains of Afghanistan searching for Osama bin Laden. During congressional fact-finding trips to Iraq, Obey said he learned many Iraqis now consider the Americans to be an occupying force rather than liberators.

"It was really enlightening. He didn't talk about politics, but about things in a way that we understand and that we don't get from the media," said Simmer.

"He didn't talk about who to vote for, but that it's important to vote," added Vererka.

Obey's talk was followed by questions from students wanting to know more about his opinions on Iraq, Afghanistan, alternative energy and immigration issues.